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19 October 2020

Your Excellency,

I have the honor to convey herewith a copy of the letter dated 19 October 2020 addressed to Your Excellency by H.E. Prof. Kudret Özersay, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8 (General debate) and agenda item 44 (Question of Cyprus) of the 75th session.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mehmet Dâna
Representative

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

c.c. H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır
President of the General Assembly
United Nations
New York

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**TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTRY AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

19 October 2020

Excellency,

On the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, I would like to express the appreciation of the Turkish Cypriot side for the diligent and tireless efforts of the organization to help resolve global issues, especially at a time when collective effort is of vital importance in addressing the unprecedented challenges that we are currently facing.

As humanity strives to cope with never-before-seen challenges brought about by COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the rise of extremism and spread of conflicts in many parts of the world, both the significance as well as the need to better utilize the tools available to the United Nations have become even more pronounced.

Let me first take this opportunity to underline our unwavering support for and commitment to the guiding principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, *inter alia*, the peaceful settlement of disputes, adherence to international law and respect for human rights.

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

c.c. H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır
President of the General Assembly
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It is a widely accepted fact that the United Nations is expected to constantly renew and revitalize itself in the face of ever changing nature of the problems facing humanity. Despite all its shortcomings, the United Nations remains to be an important platform where differences can be resolved and compromises can be achieved through dialogue and diplomacy. While it may be true that, as the then Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld ably put it, *"the United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell"*, this must not lead to complacency or lack of motivation in the search for a more inclusive, fair and effective UN system.

In this regard, it is regrettable that the Turkish Cypriot people are still being denied their rightful representation and participation in the international fora, including the relevant organs of the UN, effectively preventing Turkish Cypriots, as one of the equal co-owners of the island of Cyprus, from being heard. As a consequence, in the absence of the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriot representatives have been able to abuse their participation at international platforms to blatantly distort historical and legal facts about Cyprus. Most recently, on 24 September 2020, the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, in his address delivered during the General Debate on the occasion of the Opening of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly made a very hostile speech towards Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, fabricating legal and historical facts about Cyprus which has compelled us to respond and set the record straight.

As a general remark in response to the half an hour long all-out and vicious blame game employed by the Greek Cypriot leader during his said address, it would be best to use his own words from the same text which indeed summarizes his whole speech: *"the blame-game method is always used by those who bear the responsibility of not reaching a solution to problems or disputes they themselves created"*.

The truth of the matter is that the Cyprus problem commenced in 1963 when the Greek Cypriot partner of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus, established under international treaties, tried to impose its political will on Turkish Cypriots by force of arms and converted the bi-national Republic into a purely Greek Cypriot entity. This deep-rooted Greek Cypriot policy in Cyprus was also confessed by the then Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, in his memoirs entitled "Cyprus: My Deposition", in the following words: *"the Greek Cypriot preoccupation is that Cyprus should be a Greek Cypriot state, with a protected Turkish Cypriot minority"* (Vol. 3, P. 105).

As a matter of fact, Turkey intervened on the island in accordance with her rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee following the Greek/Greek Cypriot *coup d'état* in 1974, which aimed at annexing the island to Greece (*Enosis*). It is worth remembering in this regard that the coup itself was described by the then Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios in his speech before the Security Council on 19 July 1974 as “an invasion” by Greece. Hence, the legitimate and justified Turkish intervention was carried out against the backdrop of an 11-year-long systematic campaign of oppression directed against the Turkish Cypriots. Clearly, in view of the foregoing, the attempted portrayal of the Cyprus issue as one of “invasion” and “occupation” by Turkey in the said speech is not corroborated by historical facts. It is also crucial to note in this regard that none of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Cyprus describe the legitimate and justified Turkish intervention of 1974 as “invasion” and its subsequent presence on the island as “occupation”.

Indeed, this futile effort is aimed at diverting the attention from the fact that the Greek Cypriot side is responsible for the creation as well as the continuation of the Cyprus problem. It is an undeniable fact that all the settlement efforts that have been undertaken since 1968 have failed due to the intransigence and maximalist policies of the Greek Cypriot leadership. These facts are well recorded in the annals of the United Nations as well as the collective memory of the international community: It was the Greek Cypriot side which rejected the 1985-86 Draft Framework Agreement, the UN-sponsored Set of Ideas of 1992, the package of Confidence Building Measures of 1994 and perhaps most importantly, the Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem (Annan Plan) in April 2004 after the call made by the then Greek Cypriot leader for a “resounding no” to the UN settlement plan. Most recently, it was once again due to the refusal of the Greek Cypriot side to share power and wealth with the Turkish Cypriots that the Conference on Cyprus collapsed in 2017 in Crans Montana, Switzerland.

In his speech, the Greek Cypriot leader has once again tried to divert the attention from the fact that the main reason for the collapse of the 2017 Conference in Crans Montana is the steadfast denial on the part of the Greek Cypriot side of the fact that the Turkish Cypriot people are the equal co-owners of the island, as this is their inherent and inalienable right which was also enshrined in the international treaties. Instead, he finds it convenient to portray the Guarantee system established in 1960, which served and continues to serve as a deterrent against atrocities, as the main obstacle before a negotiated settlement.

It is, *alas*, an undeniable fact that despite the best and sustained efforts at mediation and peaceful resolution of conflicts, recent international developments point to a significant increase in armed hostilities. Power and identity politics and “zero-sum” approach of many international actors still dominate international relations. In the light of this indisputable truth of the 21st century global order, the Guarantee system established by 1960 London and Zurich Treaties is more relevant and necessary than ever, considering the geostrategic location of Cyprus and the competing interest of different actors in our region. In fact, even at a time when the two sides in Cyprus and the entire international community are still trying to cope with the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing hostile acts of the Greek Cypriot administration, including its ongoing massive armament program and military constructions along the buffer zone, supported, unfortunately, by some Security Council members, is yet another indication that the Greek Cypriot side opts for confrontation rather than cooperation, unilateralism rather than diplomacy, and domination rather than peaceful coexistence. Such choices of the Greek Cypriot leadership naturally do not instill confidence in the Turkish Cypriot people that the Greek Cypriot administration is finally ready and willing for reconciliation and building a future together with the Turkish Cypriots. Similarly, the Greek Cypriot open and persistent hostility towards a deterrent Guarantee system raises serious questions as to the real intentions of the Greek Cypriot leadership within the context of a negotiated settlement.

The Greek Cypriot policy of confrontation, unilateralism and domination also manifests itself *vis-a-vis* the issue of the hydrocarbon resources in and around Cyprus. Instead of choosing the path of diplomacy and cooperation, the Greek Cypriot insistence to disregard the inherent and inalienable rights of the Turkish Cypriots on these resources and to take unilateral steps around the Island is inevitably escalating tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean region. While on the one hand the Greek Cypriot intransigence renders unsuccessful any attempt aimed at reaching negotiated settlement to the Cyprus issue, it also continues to reject even the notion of cooperation on the issue of hydrocarbons as well as on other areas where cooperation is not just a choice but a must.

The Turkish Cypriot side has always maintained the view that cooperation, dialogue and diplomacy regarding these resources is the only way to de-escalate the tension in and around the island. No doubt, cooperation between the two sides on a variety of issues, including the hydrocarbon resources, would also contribute to build trust and in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, New York Office, 10 Grand Central - 155 E. 44th Street, Suite 1710, New York, NY 10017, which is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This material is filed with the Department of Justice where the required registration statement is available for public inspection. Registration does not indicate approval of the contents of this material by the United States Government.

that the Turkish Cypriot side tabled an updated and expanded proposal on the issue of hydrocarbons around the island in July 2019, which remains to be on the table. Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriot administration to this day refuses the peaceful path of dialogue and cooperating with the Turkish Cypriot side regarding all aspects of exploration and exploitation of the natural gas around the island. The so-called proposal of the Greek Cypriot side to set up an escrow account under the guardianship of the Greek Cypriot administration is a non-starter and a perfect example of the hegemonic Greek Cypriot mentality which sees itself as the sole and exclusive owner of the island, disregarding rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriot people.

In the face of the persistent unilateral acts of the Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot side is left with no option to take equivalent and reciprocal peaceful measures to protect the inherent and inalienable rights of the Turkish Cypriot people over the hydrocarbon resources around the island. It must also be stressed that any regional cooperation or forum on this issue that excludes Turkish Cypriots and Turkey are counterproductive for the efforts aimed at reducing tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this regard, we would also like to reiterate that any regional conference that may take place on this matter must include the Turkish Cypriot side as the co-owners of the hydrocarbon resources around the island - as also acknowledged by the international community - and thus take into account the legitimate rights and interests of all the relevant parties in the region.

On this issue, the Greek Cypriot leader also employs a method of creating confusion by taking issues out of their context. For example, he attempts to justify unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriot side on hydrocarbons by making references to previous comprehensive settlement negotiations. In view of the fact that a negotiated settlement continues to elude us in Cyprus and the underlying principle of the negotiating processes that "*nothing is agreed unless everything is agreed*", such claims are devoid of any rational explanation. He should be reminded that we are yet to achieve a negotiated settlement on the island, and moreover, there is no settlement framework where the decisions regarding the natural resources of the island would be taken by the Greek Cypriots alone. This, indeed, is another reminder of how the Greek Cypriot leadership envisages a new partnership i.e. one where the Turkish Cypriots are excluded from the decision making mechanisms pertaining to all important matters.

In the said speech, the Greek Cypriot leader does not only categorically reject to acknowledge the Turkish Cypriots as equal partners in a future negotiated settlement, but in a manner adding insult to injury, to justify this untenable position, he shows the audacity to claim

that Turkish Cypriots are controlled by Turkey and this will continue even after a negotiated settlement. This is utter disrespect to the Turkish Cypriot people, their democratic will, their elected representatives as well as the institutions they have established to govern themselves following the Greek Cypriot ousting of the Turkish Cypriots in 1963 from the 1960 partnership republic at gunpoint and turning it into a purely Greek Cypriot administration. These disparaging remarks naturally beg the question as to how a common future can even be contemplated with a "partner" who does not show a shred of respect to our distinct identity and integrity.

In relation to the issue of the closed area of Maraş that was referred to in the speech of the Greek Cypriot representative, I would like to underline the fact that the steps taken by our Government regarding the closed area of Maraş, which is part of the TRNC territory, are in line with international law, first and foremost, protecting and respecting the right to possession of former inhabitants of this town, as also called for in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. In fact, maintaining the unacceptable status quo at the expense of the rights of the said inhabitants would be violation of the relevant UN resolutions. These constructive steps will, no doubt, also help address the deep crisis of confidence between the two sides and their peoples on the island since it will provide for former inhabitants, including Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, to work together and cooperate, building confidence and creating interdependencies. It should be stressed that the former Greek Cypriot inhabitants of the closed area of Maraş are supportive of the TRNC Government's said decision, publicly stating that this decision will provide for them with the opportunity to go back to their properties, which they are ready to do so.

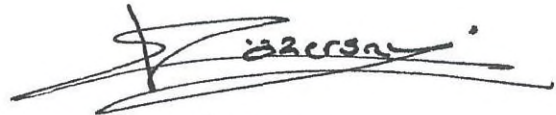
When the Greek Cypriot leader elaborates on the dangers posed by "tendencies of unilateralism and revival of nationalistic discourse", one wonders how can he explain the hostile, hegemonic and the intransigent behavior displayed by the Greek Cypriot administration against the Turkish Cypriot people? How can the Greek Cypriot leader justify the inhuman isolation vehemently imposed on the Turkish Cypriots in all aspects of life; from participation in international sporting competitions to fields of education, tourism or trade? If the Greek Cypriot leader is indeed a true champion of diplomacy, inclusiveness, constructive dialogue and cooperation, should we not expect that his words are matched, not contradicted, by his actions?

In the light of the above, the false allegations made by the Greek Cypriot leader cannot go beyond being political statements aimed at misleading the international community. The fact of the matter is that the present undesirable situation in and around the island is the result of provocation

and tensions created by the Greek Cypriot side itself. If the international community is sincere about de-escalation on the island and the region or for that matter about a negotiated settlement on the island, it must set aside political expediency as well as policies of appeasement of the Greek Cypriot side and treat the Turkish Cypriot side, once and for all, for what they really are on the island- an equal co-owner of Cyprus. It is high time that Your Excellency urges the international community towards this end. Otherwise, the Greek Cypriot administration, which is benefitting from the unacceptable status quo on the island that allows it to act unilaterally under the guise of the usurped title of "government of Republic of Cyprus" suppressing the equal co-owner rights of the Turkish Cypriot people, will continue its unilateral, illegal and provocative actions which are not only perilous for the island but also the region as a whole.

I would be grateful if the present letter is circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 44 of the agenda of its 75th session.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Prof. Kudret ÖZERSAY
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs